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**MANUAL**  
**OF THE**  
**THEOPHILANTHROPEs,**  
**OR**  
**ADORERS OF GOD,**  
**AND**  
**FRIENDS OF MEN.**

CONTAINING THE EXPOSITION OF THEIR DOGMAS, OF  
THEIR MORAL, AND OF THEIR RELIGIOUS PRACTICES;  
WITH INSTRUCTION RESPECTING THE ORGANIZATION  
AND CELEBRATION OF THEIR WORSHIP.

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ARRANGED BY CERTAIN CITIZENS,  
AND ADOPTED BY THE  
**Theophilanthropic Societies**  
ESTABLISHED IN PARIS.

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SECOND EDITION,  
TRANSLATED BY JOHN WALKER,  
*Author of Elements of Geography, and Universal Gazetteer.*

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## TO THE READER.

**H**AVING wished to know something of the state of the French, as to their profession of religion, since the general wreck of the old establishments, it has been a gratification to me, to find, on my arrival here, that this is a subject which has not been wholly neglected by a people, whom, from their having relinquished their former profession, we have been taught, in the surrounding nations, to consider as atheists. While the government here is beginning to interfere, like those of other states, between the people and their Creator; and, like them, may probably, by its protection, embarrass or impede the progress of true religion, while it can only promote that which is factitious, (as, in former times, if we may use mythological language, 'the gospel dove was rather crushed, than cherished, in the embrace of the imperial eagle,' when the simplicity of Christianity, was lost under the pomp and pageantry, which it received from

the protection of ancient Rome,) it may be satisfactory to many to find, that there are societies in this country, whose views are benevolent, and who seek not to obtain for themselves a political and exclusive establishment.

Under this idea, I make haste to dispatch the following little summary, which has been handed to me from a society, whose cordiality and affection are solacing and impressive.

#### TRANSLATOR.

*Paris, 6th of 7th  
Month, 1797.*

#### INTRODUCTION.



# INTRODUCTION.

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**M**ANY fathers of families, persuaded that religious principles are the only solid base of a good education, the only restraint against secret crimes, the best consolation in adversity, the most efficacious encouragement to the accomplishment of all duties, have associated themselves together, for the purpose of seeking the means of preventing their children from falling into the dangers of irreligion.

They have considered, that mysterious forms of worship have many adversaries; that the most part of young people, educated in these sorts of worship, are not capable of resisting, when launched out into the world, the numerous arguments with which they are attacked; and that often, in renouncing the mysteries, they forget, at the same time, both religion and morality.

They have thought, that the most sure part was to inculcate in their children, the principles of natural religion, which no man can attack, unless, indeed he be insane, or absolutely corrupted; that once being accustomed to conduct themselves after the principles of this religion, which all people respect,

respect, and which is the base of all the worship in the earth, they probably never would renounce it; and that, consequently, they would continue uncorrupted till their latest breath.

To recal them more frequently, and more efficaciously, to the principles of this natural religion, they have agreed to observe with them, at certain periods, some exterior, but very simple practices, of which it is extremely easy to comprehend the design.

For fear that time might change their principles, and overcharge their practices with superstitious institutions, they have requested one of their number, to form an exposition both of one and the other. The code here presented is what they have approved. It is this code, which, maintaining in the bosom of several families, peace, amity, and concord, already, in many instances, cheers the paths of declining life. May it speedily extend its benign influence over the whole world!

We shall not be accused of being ambitious sectaries, nor of seeking to establish, in our favour, a new priesthood. The exercise of the Theophilanthropic worship, has no need of ministers, but only of readers or speakers; temporary functions, which are filled by the heads of families. We do not propose to the people, either a new religion, or a new worship. Our religion is the religion universal. We can trace back our worship to the first ages of the world; and, by the exposition of our doctrine,

doctrine, it may be seen, that we are the friends of every religious society upon the earth; we respect their opinions, we practise their moral. The name \* even, that we have given to our religious association, does not belong to it alone, but to all which have for their end to carry men to the adoration of the Divinity, and to the love of their kind. Thus, Theophilanthropy, far from making a new sect, tends to reunite those which exist in one sentiment only, that of piety, of charity, of concord, and of tolerance. Already, under the pretext of religion, there has been too great an effusion of blood. By this code, men may learn that it is easy for them to agree with each other; that they really are agreed on the essential principles of religion and morality; and, that differences in opinions and usages, ought not to break the bonds of fraternity, which the Author of Nature has established between all his children.

\* *Theophilanthrope* is composed of three Greek words, and signifies, *one who loves God and Men.*





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MANUAL  
OF THE  
*THEOPHILANTHROPEs.*

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CHAP. I.

*Dogmas of the Theophilanthropes.*

THE Theophilanthropists believe in the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul.

The spectacle of the universe attests the existence of the First Being.

The faculty, which we possess, of thinking, assures us that we have, within ourselves, a principle which is superior to matter, and which survives the dissolution of the body.

The existence of God, and the immortality of the soul, do not need long demonstrations: they are sentimental truths, which every one may find written in his heart, if he consult it with sincerity. The wicked only seek to doubt them, because the idea of a just God disturbs their criminal enjoyments.

The Theophilanthropists are attached the more closely to this double belief, because it is as neces-

fary to the preservation of social order, as to the happiness of individuals. For, an aggregation of men, not recognizing Deity, and believing their crimes to be for ever buried in the tomb, would quickly become a troop of ferocious beasts.

Cold and mistaken reasoners! how is it that ye dare to demand, that the opinions on which depend the happiness of mankind, should be proved to your understandings? Are there no truths, but those which are capable of being submitted to mathematical demonstration? and is that which appertains to sentiment entirely without evidence? Can that be a system of errors, which renders men good, compassionate, and strict as to truth, and all their duties? Can that, which tends to persuade them that they may be treacherous, ungrateful, cruel, that they may even become parricides, and that the only crime is their not having the address to escape human justice; can a system so monstrous be the truth? Such is the system which denies the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul.

What God is, what is the soul, how he recompenses the good, and punishes the wicked, the Theophilanthropists do not rashly attempt to penetrate into. They are convinced that there is too great a distance between God and the creature, that it should attempt to comprehend him. They content themselves to know, from the magnificence and order of the universe, from the testimony of every people,  
and

and that of their own conscience, that there exists a God; that they cannot conceive a God without the idea of every perfection; that, of consequence, God is good, that he is just, that virtue will therefore be rewarded, and vice punished.

It is easy to deceive ourselves, or to be deceived. Our opinions depend on so many circumstances, of which we are not the masters, that the Theophilanthropists are persuaded, that God, just and good, will not judge us after our opinions, nor after our different forms of worship, but from the sincerity of our hearts, and from our actions. They are watchful, therefore, not to dislike, much less to persecute, their fellow men, for opinions of which they do not participate. They seek only, if they believe them in error, to undeceive them by a gentle persuasion: if they continue in their errors, they still retain for them the same sentiments of friendship. They only have in horror, actions which are criminal; they pity the culpable, and employ all their efforts to reconduct them to the paths of virtue.

## CHAP. II.

### *Moral of the Theophilanthropes\*.*

**T**HEIR morality is founded on one single precept.

WORSHIP GOD, CHERISH YOUR KIND, RENDER YOURSELVES USEFUL TO THE COUNTRY.

This principle is the consequence of the existence of God. Since he is the Supreme Governor of the universe, since we hold every thing of him, we owe him the homage of gratitude. We owe friendship to our fellow men, who are, with ourselves, his children. The obligation to cherish our kind, includes that of loving our country, of rendering ourselves useful to our fellow citizens, with whom we have more immediate relation, than with the inhabitants of the other parts of the globe, and who protect, more immediately, our existence.

All morality, which agrees with this great principle, is good in the eyes of the Theophilanthropists.

\* It is not intended here to give a complete and methodical treatise of morality, but only to bear testimony to the precepts which all men find in their hearts, and which they have, at almost every instant of their lives, occasion to put in practice.

It



It serves them as a rule in all their actions, and from it they consider all their duties to flow.

§ I.

*Worship God.*

To adore the Supreme Being, is to render homage to his power, and to his goodness, and to be thankful for his benefits; it is not to murmur at events which we regard as unhappy, but to be submissive thereunto, as to an effect of the Divine will, and to profit by it, in having the mind fortified and rendered independent of all that is without us; that we may not accustom ourselves to the idea of good, except in wisdom and virtue; nor to the idea of evil, but in crime and in folly.

To adore God is, above all, to be obedient to his law, which he has clearly explained to us by that interior sentiment, which carries us to the good, and which turns us from the evil. This is called *conscience*. Who can mistake its voice? Some unhappy ones seek in vain to stifle it, in accustoming themselves to crime. But it ceases not to cry to them, *Thou doest evil*. Its approbation, which manifests itself by the satisfaction which we feel in doing well, is the sweetest recompence of virtue upon earth.

As the conscience, always infallible, when exercised in judging of the morality of our actions,

that is to say, of the intention which produced them, may sometimes be wavering on the nature of good or evil in itself, the Theophilanthropists have a sure rule not to be deceived in this respect. This rule is comprehended in the following maxim.

*Good, is every thing which tends to the preservation, or the perfection of man.*

*Evil, is every thing which tends to destroy, or to deteriorate him.*

This principle, in its moral application, shews to the Theophilanthropists, that there are no actions which are good, but those that are useful; and that no actions are evil, but those which are hurtful. To do any thing, useful to ourselves, and hurtful to others, is always a crime. To do any thing useful to others, and hurtful to ourselves only, is the heroism of virtue.

§ 2.

*Cherish your Kind.*

To cherish one's fellow men is to love them as one's self. He that cherishes his fellows, does that to others, which he would wish them to do to him.

He does not do to any one, that which he would not wish to be done to himself.

He is neither calumniator nor evil speaker.

He does not put off till to-morrow, the service which he can render immediately.

He

He does not oppress those who are weaker than himself; he lends them his aid, to defend them against oppression.

He relieves the unhappy.

He comforts his brethren when they are in affliction.

He visits them when they are sick. He gives help to those who are in his power; he sustains their courage; he endeavours to put far from them the terrors of death, and to conduct them gently, on the wings of hope, to the gates of eternity.

He pardons others the evil which they do to him.

He seeketh not to avenge himself. He forgetteth injuries. He avoideth the wicked, if he cannot make himself useful to them, in amending their ways.

He succours the widow and the orphan.

He lendeth not for usury.

He refuseth not that which he oweth; neither doth he cause the indigent to wait for the price of his labour.

He turneth not his eyes from the poor.

He giveth with discernment, and favours not the indigence of idleness.

He does not hinder him from doing good, who has a mind thereunto; and he doeth good himself, at all times, when it is in his power.

He honoureth old age.

He hath respect unto calamity.

He is hospitable towards strangers.

He favours not the rich, to the prejudice of the poor.

He deceiveth not; he doth nothing contrary to equity and good faith.

He envieth not the success of the good man, he imitates his industrious probity; still less does he covet the gain of the fraudulent: riches, dishonestly acquired, are an increase of evil to the wicked.

He putteth a bridle to his wrath: he exciteth not quarrels by his passions; he appeaseth them by his gentleness.

He avoids the excesses which disturb reason, and lead to violence.

He suffers the faults of others, being well persuaded that he himself has faults, which others see better than he, and which they are obliged to bear with.

He delivereth himself not up, without reason, to distrust and evil suspicions. He giveth not his ear to calumny and tale-bearing; he avoids every thing which tends to break that good understanding which ought to exist among brethren.

He is patient, gentle, beneficent; he puffeth not himself up with pride; he is neither contemptuous, nor egotistical, nor ambitious; he is not easily irritated or offended; he does not find pleasure in a lie or injustice; he loveth the truth.

He doth good without ostentation, and without being weary.

He



He pardons his enemies: he does good to those who hate him, who persecute him, and who calumniate him.

He judgeth not others more severely than he judgeth himself.

The sun doth not ever go down upon his anger.

If there be any who are under him, he treateth them with gentleness.

If he be subordinate himself, he sheweth, towards those who are over him, respect and affection; he fulfilleth his duties with exactness, and without the necessity of their having an eye over him.

§ 3.

*Render yourselves useful to the Country.*

To render one's self useful to one's country, is a duty of which it is not difficult to shew the necessity. Besides its being included, as already shewn, in the obligation of cherishing our kind, our interest makes it a law to us. It is to the reunion of those who are about us, that we owe our safety, and all the advantages we enjoy in society. Man, who has a long and feeble infancy, would almost always perish by famine, or become a prey to wild beasts, if he were isolated, or reduced to the sterile defence of his father and mother.

A society cannot subsist, but by the tendency of all the members, which compose it, to its conservation.

ation. On its sufferings, or its prosperity, immediately depend the sufferings, or the prosperity, of every individual. We ought then, as well by gratitude as by interest, to co-operate for the welfare of the society, in the bosom of which we have been born, and in which we have been reared: that is to say, we ought to render ourselves useful to our country.

He who would be useful to his country, if he have children, instructs them, and accustoms them, from their early years, to virtue; to the end that they may, in their turn, become useful to society. In such a conduct, he will himself find his happiness and his glory; while a son, badly instructed, is the shame of his father and of his mother.

The good citizen is industrious. Like to the ant, which makes during the summer its provision for the winter, he obtains for himself, while he is young, the means of subsistence for old age. The industrious man always collecteth abundance, but the idle are always poor; want suddenly overtaketh them, like a man who makes rapid strides. Not to have need of any one, it is necessary to labour. Idleness engendereth cares, it is the parent of all vices. Industry, on the contrary, produceth all the pleasures; it renders the people, and individuals, rich and powerful. Thus, the industrious man is at the same time useful to his country, to his family, and to himself.

Is the country in danger? We ought, without hesitation, to fly to its defence. It is this absolute devotedness, which alone makes the safeguard of the state in general, and of each citizen in particular. Let us offer up our prayers, that at length all the human race may regard each other as brothers, and cease to destroy one another. But if our country be attacked, the only means of obtaining a solid peace, is to oppose a vigorous defence. Without that, all the inhabitants would be the victims of the enemy. All then are obliged, as well by interest as by duty, to reunite all their efforts to drive him back.

It is indispensable, for the support of the country, that each individual be submissive to the laws, and pay to the state the contributions which are due to it.

Every member of society, owes to society at large, the example of his respect for the manners, for the laws, for the magistrates, for all the kinds of public worship, and for their ministers, for the general received usages which do not clash with morality; the example, in a word, of all the virtues which make the good son, the good husband, the good father, the good citizen.

### C H A P. III.

#### *Practice of the Theophilanthropes.*

**A**LL the religion of the Theophilanthropists is included in the two preceding chapters. They there find an abridgment of all their duties. They attach not a superstitious importance to the exterior practices, of which here follows a detail; they regard them only as good to observe, because some are useful to them in establishing an order in their conduct; and others, in striking their senses, recal them, in a manner more efficacious, to the Divinity, to the perfection of their being, to the accomplishment of all their duties.

#### § 1.

#### *Daily Conduct of the Theophilanthropes\*.*

The Theophilanthropist devotes to sleep, the time which is necessary to recruit his strength. On his rising, he lifts up his soul to the Divinity, and ad-

\* The object of this section, being to shew the manner in which the Theophilanthropists conduct themselves in the course of the day, the reader may find in it, not only religious practices, which it is good to observe, but precepts of which the moral commands the accomplishment.



dresses to him, at least in thought, this short invocation :

“ Father of Nature, I bless thy benefits, I thank thee for thy gifts.

“ I admire the fine order of things which thou hast established by thy wisdom, and which thou maintainest by thy providence, and I entirely submit myself to this universal order.

“ I ask not of thee the power to do well; thou hast given me this power, and, with it, conscience to love the good, reason to know it, and liberty to chuse it. I should then be without excuse, if I did evil. I take the resolution before thee not to make use of my liberty but for the purpose of doing good, whatever allurements the evil may appear to present to me.

“ I will not address unto thee indiscreet prayers: thou knowest the creatures which have come out of thy hands; their wants escape not thy notice; their most secret thoughts are not hidden from thee. I only pray thee to rectify the errors of the world and my own; for almost all the evils which afflict the generations of men come from their errors.

“ Full of confidence in thy justice, in thy bounty, I resign myself to every thing which may arrive: my only desire is that thy will may be done.”

He flees idleness, as the most dangerous state. He labours with zeal; he rests himself by varying his pursuits. He always occupies himself, even during  
his

his leisure. Inaction enervates both body and mind. During the day he remembers that he is in the presence of the Divinity. This witness of all his actions and his conscience support him in the practice of good, turn him from the evil, warn him not to abuse his prosperity, and to support adversity with courage.

At the moment of his repast, he mentally acknowledges his gratitude to the Author of Nature. He eats and drinks with sobriety. Health accompanies moderation; indigence and diseases are the consequence of intemperance.

At the end of the day, he asks himself: of what fault hast thou corrected thyself to-day?—What evil inclination hast thou combated?—In what art thou improved?—The result of this examination of the conscience, is the resolution to be better on the morrow.

§ 2.

*The Holidays, religious and moral, of the Theophilanthropes.*

The temple the most worthy of the Divinity, in the eyes of the Theophilanthropists, is the Universe. Abandoned sometimes, under the vault of the heavens, to the contemplation of the beauties of nature, they render to its Author the homage of adoration and of gratitude. They, nevertheless, have temples  
erected

erected by the hands of men, in which it is more commodious for them to assemble, to listen to lessons concerning his wisdom. Persuaded, that if God have no need of our worship, we have need to render it to him, for to recal to us the remembrance of this witness of all our actions, and for to mutually encourage us to virtue, they assemble on the mornings of the days consecrated to rest, in a neat and decent place.

Certain moral inscriptions; a simple altar, on which they deposit, as a sign of gratitude for the benefits of the Creator, such flowers or fruits as the seasons afford; a tribune, for the lectures and discourses, form the whole of the ornaments of their temples.

The first inscription placed above the altar, recals to remembrance the two religious dogmas which are the foundation of their moral.

#### FIRST INSCRIPTION.

*We believe in the Existence of God, in the Immortality of the Soul.*

The four others are placed on each side of the principal inscription. They recal the general principles of morality, and the particular duties of each age.

#### SECOND INSCRIPTION.

*Worship God, cherish your Kind, render yourselves useful to the Country.*

#### THIRD

THIRD INSCRIPTION.

*Good is every thing which tends to the Preservation  
or the Perfection of Man.*

*Evil is every thing which tends to destroy, or to  
deteriorate him.*

FOURTH INSCRIPTION.

*Children, honour your Fathers and Mothers. Obey  
them with Affection. Comfort their old Age.*

*Fathers and Mothers, instruct your Children.*

FIFTH INSCRIPTION.

*Wives, regard in your Husbands the Chiefs of your  
Houses.*

*Husbands, love your Wives, and render yourselves  
reciprocally happy.*

A head of a family, neatly and simply clothed, his head uncovered, reads the two first chapters of this Manual, which are on the tenets and morality, and some paragraph on the daily conduct of the Theophilanthropists.

After this lecture, which can be from time to time abridged, when the reunion is complete, the reader, standing at the side of the altar, recites with a loud voice the invocation, *Father of Nature, &c.*

The assembly, in the same attitude, repeat it in a low voice.

This invocation is followed by an interval of silence, during which, each reflects on his conduct  
since



since the last religious holiday: the head of the family, who officiates, can assist in this examination, by putting questions, which each can tacitly answer to himself.

The assembly sits to hear lessons or discourses on morality, which agree with the principles exposed in this Manual; principles of religion, of benevolence, and of universal toleration; principles equally remote from the severity of stoicism and epicurean indolence.

These lectures and discourses are diversified by hymns.

The Theophilanthropists do not endeavour to attract the attention of the world, by numerous assemblies\*. Each head of a family, being the minister of their worship, it is easy to them to exercise it in the bosom of their families. If, however, to give to society an example, which may be useful to the support of religion and morality, they celebrate their holidays in the public edifices, they observe the same practices, without adding any thing thereto.

If the exercise of worship be attended with certain expences, these are provided for by voluntary offerings. The overplus, if there be any, is devoted to the relief of the poor.

\* The assemblies multiply rapidly, and are exceedingly crowded. They are holden on the first day of the week, and on the decades. T.

*Celebration of the Birth of Children.*

When a child is born, it is brought into the assembly, at the end of a religious holiday.

The father, or, in his absence, one of its nearest relations, declares the names which have been given to it, as enregistered in the public record of births, and he holds it up towards the heavens. The head of a family, who has presided in the assembly, addresses to him the following words :

“ You promise before God, and before men, to educate N. in the doctrine of the Theophilanthropists ; to inspire him, from the dawn of his reason, with a belief of the existence of God, and of the immortality of the soul ; and to penetrate him with the necessity of worshipping God, of cherishing his kind, and of rendering himself useful to his country.”

The father answers, “ I promise it.”

It is good that the father, when he can accomplish it, prevail upon two honest people, one of each sex, to become the godfather and godmother of the child ; persons who know how to appreciate the duties that these titles impose upon them.

When there is a godfather and godmother, the chief of a family says to them :

“ Ye promise before God, and before men, to take the place of parents to this child, as much as possible,

possible, if these shall not have it in their power to take the necessary care of him."

They answer, " We promise it."

The *chef de famille* gives a discourse on the duties of fathers and mothers, and of those who rear the children.

This day is a holiday for the family.

§ 4.

*Religious Instruction of the Children.*

It consists in penetrating the children with the principles of this Manual, and of the elementary instruction on religious morality, by question and answer, adopted by the Theophilanthropists. On these books, an elementary course of religious morality is founded, for those in whom reason begins to develope itself. This course, whether in families, or in the temples, is repeated every year, and continues for three or four months. When it is terminated, those of the children who have given the greatest satisfaction, have a distinguished place at one of the religious assemblies. After the meeting, if there be only one child, the *chef de famille* interrogates him publicly.

Do ye believe most firmly that there is a God?

*L'enfant.* Yes, I believe it.

*Le chef de famille.* What reason have you to believe it.

*L'enfant.*

*L'enfant.* Because the most simple machine could neither make nor move itself; much less could the world, which is so fine, so vast, have the power of making itself; and it cannot conduct itself without the assistance of a First Being.

*Le chef de famille.* Do you believe that you have a soul?

*L'enfant.* Yes, I believe it.

*Le chef de famille.* What reason have you to believe it?

*L'enfant.* Because I think, and I could not think, if I had not a soul.

*Le chef de famille.* What ought we to conclude from the existence of a God and the immortality of the soul?

*L'enfant.* Since we have a soul, death is only a passage from this life to another; since there is a God, he must be just and good; since God is just and good, the virtuous will be recompensed, and the wicked will be punished.

*Le chef de famille.* What is it necessary to do to be of the number of the virtuous?

*L'enfant.* To worship God, to cherish one's kind, and to render one's self useful to their country.

*Le chef de famille.* Do you promise before God, and before men, to make use of your reason, that you may remain attached to the doctrine of the Theophilanthropists, which consists in the belief of the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul;



foul; and which teaches us to worship God, to cherish our kind, and to render ourselves useful to our country?

*L'enfant.* I promise it.

If there are many children, the *chef de famille* only interrogates one of them; but he addresses to them all the last question, and they answer, "we promise it." He gives rewards to some, he addresses words of encouragement to others, according to the merit of each. He makes a discourse on the duties of youth.

This day is a holiday for the families of the children.

§ 5.

*Marriage of the Theophilanthropes.*

The espoused couple, after having fulfilled the formalities prescribed by the laws of the country, present themselves at the religious assembly of the family, or the abode of the bride. After the celebration of worship, they appear by the altar; they are tied together with ribbons, or garlands of flowers, the two extremities of which are supported on each side of the espoused couple, by their parents or relations.

*Le chef de famille to the bridegroom.* You have taken N. for your wife?

*Bridegroom.* Yes.

To

*To the bride.* You have taken N. for your husband?

*Bride.* Yes.

To these formalities may be added, the presentation of the ring from the bridegroom to the bride, the medal of union given by the bridegroom to the bride; or other ceremonies of this kind, according to the usages of the country, while these formalities have a moral signification, and the same character of simplicity.

The *chef de famille* makes a discourse on the duties of marriage. He ought to take the advantage of this circumstance, and of that of the presentation of children, to engage husbands and fathers, seeing that they have the hope of re-living in their posterity, to occupy themselves for the happiness of future generations. He invites them to fulfil this sacred duty, either in planting some trees, in engrafting upon wild stocks, in the woods, fruitful branches, which may one day assuage the hunger or thirst of the wandering traveller, or in some other seasonable acts of this kind, which the love of their descendants may inspire them to perform.

The family celebrates, on this day, the union of the married pair.

§ 6.

*The last Duties rendered to the Dead, by the Theophilanthropes.*

They render these last duties, following the usages of the country. After the celebration of worship, on the holiday which follows the decease, they place in the temple a tablet, on which are written these words :

*Death is the Commencement of Immortality.*

An urn may be placed before the altar, shaded with the leaves of trees.

The *chef de famille* says, Death has stricken one of our kind. (He adds, if the deceased was arrived at the age of reason: let us preserve the remembrance of his virtues, and forget his faults.) May this event be a warning to us, to be always ready to appear before the Supreme Judge of our actions.

The *chef de famille* makes some reflections on death, on the shortness of life, on the immortality of the soul, &c.

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Hymns may be sung, at all these different religious celebrations, suited to the occasion.

INSTRUCTION

# INSTRUCTION,

*Respecting the Organization and Celebration of the  
Worship of the Theophilanthropes,*

TO ALL THE WORSHIPPERS OF GOD, AND  
FRIENDS OF MEN.

WHEN our Manual first appeared, it contained an exposition of our dogmas, of our morality, and of our religious practices. This exposition sufficed at that time, because the worship of the Theophilanthropists was then only professed in the bosom of certain families. Now that it is become public, it is necessary to establish a mode, which may render the organization of it easy to those who should desire to propagate it, and which may every where preserve the unity and the simplicity of the principles and the forms.

We not only call those *Theophilanthropes*, who follow our mode of worship; but the professors of every worship, which leads man to the adoration of the Divinity, and to the love of his neighbour. Such is the signification of this denomination, which, far from characterizing a sect, belongs to all religious men, whatever may be their forms of worship.

Ye see then, after this explication, that almost all the inhabitants of the earth are Theophilanthropists,  
seeing



seeing that they are agreed on the fundamental principles of religion and morality, and only differ in some shadows of forms and opinions. Thus, far from seeking to overturn the altars of any worship, ye ought even to moderate the zeal which might carry you to make proselytes to ours. Profess it modestly, and wait in peace, that those to whom its simplicity may be agreeable, may join themselves to you. Respect the opinions of those, who believe it to be their duty to follow a worship more charged with dogmas and ceremonies. They are not less your brethren, they are not less Theophilanthropists than yourselves.

Ye will not, then, for the extending of our worship, take any indiscreet step. If ye dwell in a country where its publicity can be the occasion of the least trouble, content yourselves to exercise it in the bosom of your families. It is thus that many sages have heretofore practised it, when they had not their doctrine written in any other book than that of the heart.

If ye live in the midst of a people, with whom the publicity of our worship has not any inconvenience, do not decline your attendance, because it will be useful to the propagation and support of the principles of religion, of morality, of concord, and of tolerance.

Form a small committee of fathers of families, of ripened age, who join to a conduct without reproach, a sage and enlightened mind.

This committee will direct your religious and moral holidays, and will prepare or examine the lectures and discourses appointed for each holiday.

Be very circumspect in asking voluntary contributions for the relief of the poor, of any who attend your celebrations of worship: it is a delicate function, to be the dispensers of the benefits of others. If, however, ye think you ought to introduce into your religious institution, an institution of beneficence, take care that the funds be not touched by those who most commonly fulfil the functions of readers or speakers, or who are of the committee of direction. Name a treasurer, and some administrators, who may render, from time to time, their accounts to the committee, in the presence of the greatest number of persons possible.

We recommend to you, above all things, not to change the affecting simplicity of the worship. Ye may often be told, that it is necessary to strike the senses of the multitude, by the pomp of representation. Answer, that ye do not seek to make proselytes; that ye desire not any to join you, but those to whom your simplicity is agreeable.

But those know little of the human heart, who think that a worship cannot attach men to it, without external pomp. We have ourselves the experience, since we publicly profess our worship, that almost all those who attend our meetings, learned and unlearned, experience soft emotions, and more than

than once they have been tendered into tears. Let the people repeat your songs; let decency and piety reign in your assemblies; let the hymns, lectures, and discourses, strike the heart; let them be clear, containing only the precepts consistent with universal reason, ye will not have need of ceremonies.

Do not admit a single one, though it may appear to you simple, and without consequence. Ye will no sooner have permitted a first to be introduced, than ye will be obliged to admit another, then a third; and speedily the Theophilanthropic worship will become unnatural; the people will attach themselves more to ceremonies than to precepts, and will fall into superstition.

That which we say to you respecting ceremonies, applies also to the ornaments of the temples. Let a decent simplicity reign there; do not admit into them any sculpture, painting, or engraving, which has for its end to represent the Divinity, or any of its attributes; or any of the human virtues; or any other object purely intellectual, which cannot be figured but by allegories, and consequently in a manner always unfaithful. Neither admit the representation of any particular person, because the most virtuous men have their weaknesses, and the image of any mortal, is not worthy of being placed in the temple of the Divinity. Ye might more fitly adorn your temples, with the representation of the works of the Creator, or of virtuous actions, indicated in a



general manner, without any individual being characterized. We believe the maintaining of these principles to be very important for preventing superstition, idolatry, and party spirit.

Do not have any particular holidays; but celebrate the benefits of the Creator, according to the different seasons of the year.

Avoid also innovations. Vary your songs, your lectures, your discourses; but preserve your inscriptions, the form of your offerings, the order prescribed in your meetings. There is no doubt but it is possible to have inscriptions as good, perhaps even better than those we present you. However, since they are incontestably true, do not change them. Nothing hurts institutions so much, especially religious institutions, as innovations. Do not increase the number of the inscriptions: your temples would be overcharged with them. Ye have in our books the finest sentences of the sages, ancient and modern; engrave them in your hearts, without inscribing them on your walls.

Be cautious to prevent inquiet or superficial spirits from introducing ornaments, ceremonies, or innovations, in the celebration of worship. Do not admit, either to arrange the lectures or discourses, or to be members of your committees, any but those who shall have previously declared, that they approve of the simplicity of the Theophilanthropic worship, and that they will not make, nor hear, any proposition tending



tending to introduce any change, or to add any ceremonies to the practices indicated in the Manual, and in *L'année Religieuse* of the Theophilanthropists.

We cannot too much recommend to you, that there be not made in the public meetings, any lesson, or any discourse, which has not been previously submitted to the committee of direction. In the examination that ye make of these lectures and discourses, do not ever lose sight of this, that if there be different forms of worship, there is only one religion, as there is only one morality; and that, occupying yourselves in your meetings only with religion and morality, there ought not, of consequence, to be any thing advanced there, which is not suited to all times, to all countries, to all worship, to all governments.

Regard the instruction of the children, as one of the first duties. Make, each of you, in your families, or name some one among you, to make, during three or four months of the year, on every holiday, an elementary course of religious morality, to the children in whom reason begins to develop itself, following that which is given in Chap. III.

§ 4. We believe that it is good, in order that the children may not be fatigued, not to prolong this course beyond three or four months, nor to admit them to it before nine or twelve years of age.

Your committees of direction having generally to be occupied only with the examination of the discourses

discourses or lectures, which shall be presented to them, will seldom have occasion for long deliberations. Reduce all your operations to the greatest possible simplicity; and let not your worship hinder any of you from fulfilling the duties of his profession, by which he provides for his own subsistence, and for that of his family.

The time is not far distant, when your committees of direction will rarely be under the necessity of assembling: it is that when our *année religieuse* shall be complete. Then ye will have lessons and discourses chosen and varied for all the holidays of the year; then the most simple villager will be able to direct the celebration of the Theophilanthropists worship, whether in his family or in the public temples.

If any one ask you what is the origin of your religion, and of your worship, you can answer him thus:

" Open the most ancient books which are known; seek there what was the religion, what the worship of the first human beings, of which history has preserved the remembrance. There you will see, that their religion was what we now call *natural religion*, because it has for its principle, even the Author of Nature. It is he that has engraven it in the heart of the first human beings, in ours, in that of all the inhabitants of the earth; this religion, which consists in worshipping God, and cherishing our kind,

is what we express by one single word, that of Theophilanthropy. Thus, our religion is that of our first parents, it is yours, it is ours, it is the universal religion.

“ As to our worship, it is also that of our first fathers. We see in the most ancient writings, that the exterior signs, by which they rendered their homage to the Creator, were of great simplicity. They dressed for him an altar of earth; they offered him, in sign of their gratitude, and of their submission, some of the productions which they held of his liberal hand. The fathers exhorted their children, to virtue, they all encouraged one another, under the auspices of the divinity, to the accomplishment of their duties. This simple worship, the sages of all nations have not ceased to profess, in respecting others, and they have transmitted it down to us without interruption.”

If they yet ask you of whom you hold your mission, answer :

“ We hold it of God himself, who, in giving us two arms to aid our kind, has also given us intelligence to mutually enlighten us, and the love of good to bring us together to virtue; of God, who has given experience and wisdom to the aged, to guide the young, and authority to fathers, to conduct their children.”

If they are not struck with the force of these reasons, do not farther discuss the subject, and do

not engage yourselves in controversies, which tend to diminish the love of our neighbour. Our principles are the eternal truth; they will subsist, whatever individuals may support or attack them; and the efforts of the wicked will not ever prevail against them. Rest firmly attached to them, without attacking or defending any religious system, and remember, that similar discussions have never produced good, and that they have often tinged the earth with the blood of men. Let us lay aside systems, and apply ourselves to doing good. It is the only road to happiness.





